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ABSTRACT

Instructional television (ITV) today is being used by only one-fifth of the schools in this country; even though television makes possible education tailor-made to the needs of each student, it is often used merely as a supplement to education as memorization of standardized facts. Television must be used to bring the world to the student and vice versa, and it is the responsibility of those who develop instructional television to see that it is used correctly so that the long-needed revolution in education can finally take place. (Author/RH)

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ADDRESS TO THE FIFTH ANNUAL INSTRUCTIONAL TELEVISION CONFERENCE OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF EDUCATIONAL BROADCASTERS, THE ELECTRONIC INDUSTRIES ASSOCIATION AND THE EDUCATIONAL MEDIA COUNCIL.

April 19, 1967, Biltmore Hotel, New York, N.Y.

"ARE YOU TEN FEET TALL?"

by

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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(The comments in this paper are Dr. Hilliard's own as a private individual and do not necessarily reflect the endorsement or approval of the Federal Communications Commission, the Committee for the Full Development of the Instructional Television Fixed Service, or the Federal Interagency Broadcast Committee.)

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(FOLLOWING OPENING REMARKS:)

(I propose to discuss with you today some areas of communications and education that are not part of the regulatory duties of the FCC and, accordingly, my comments are my own as a private individual and do not necessarily reflect FCC endorsement or approval.)

There's nothing like a few hard statistics every once in a while to take the silk gloves off the mutual pats on the backs. Did you see the recent reports by the National Center for School and College Television and the National Education Association that indicate only 19% of the schools in this country are using ETV and only 9% of the elementary and secondary schools are using closed circuit television in instruction?

What do I mean, only 19% and only 9%!

That's a lot better than the estimates of 10% and 3% using television three years ago. But if ITV is as good as we think it is, if it is as indispensible to education as we claim it is, that figure should be no less--unequivocally no less--than 100%.

Yes, I know: Rome and all that!

But in terms of the progress of the world today, in terms of the geometric rate of expanding developments in transportation and communications, bringing all peoples and all nations together in a mutually many-sided view at the same time, education doesn't have much more than a day in which to catch up!

What percentage of the schools in this country today are using books?

Do you think that the electronic media, that television, are not at least as important to learning and teaching as are books? If you think they are not, I respectfully suggest to you that you are in the wrong profession--as well as in the wrong century.

Why are only one-fifth of the schools that should be and can be using television as an integral part of the educational process doing so?

I suggest to you that what we should be doing here during the three days of this instructional television conference is devoting our individual and joint efforts to determining why this is so, and what we must do about it--and cease spending time rehashing last week's programs and this week's distribution problems and next week's video-tape recorder specifications.

Let me suggest to you that the real name of our game is--revolution!

Television--just this one medium alone--is an affective force, changing sets and attitudes of learning and teaching so that the educational process must change in order to take advantage of the medium, and in order, at the same time, to reflect the medium's impact.

Perhaps some administrators and teachers believe that they cannot afford to let education move into the 20th century. It may prove upsetting.

Too often we have gone along with them. We have tiptoed behind them, making soothing sounds about a little enrichment at a quarter to ten on Tuesday and Thursday.

We have permitted television to be used as a frill. Instead of exercising the forceful leadership that we should--because it is we who have the resources and the ability to create the needed revolution in education--we have been content to use television as reinforcement. Reinforcement of degenerative, outdated education that is at least a century behind the needs and possibilities of today's world and today's student. We have been content to sneak television through the back door.

We have been content to suggest that it is sufficient to get a receiver into the classroom and that it should be the teacher's prerogative whether it is used or not. And we have considered that much an accomplishment. We have been content to bow gracefully away from a direct impact upon the curriculum and to permit a curriculum coordinator to determine exactly what will be televised so that it can "enrich and supplement"--not change--the present outmoded content and process in learning and teaching. And we have considered that much an accomplishment.

We have permitted the media to provide materials that have little relationship to needs, that reinforce a "Dick and Jane" curriculum. We know that television can create a new curriculum; that it has already created a new process of learning for every child outside of the schoolroom, a process that must be brought into the school; and that by its very nature and potential it calls for new content that has value and meaning for the student. And yet we continue to use television to enrich, to reinforce the Dick and Jane materials, the Dick and Jane content, and the Dick and Jane concepts on every level of learning and teaching.

We have been content to put a patch onto ragtag education, when what television makes possible is education tailor-made to the needs of each student.

Let us move bodly, frontally, unhesitatingly into our institutions and into our communities. We have something of inestimable value, and we have got to start acting like it is, even if we have to upset some apple carts to do it.

I tell you this: we who are aware of the potentials of television in education and upon education have at least as much to contribute to and are at least as important to education in our institutions, communities and states as are many of the principals, administrators and superintendents who do not share this awareness and ability--and its about time, we started acting like it!

I think that all of us here would agree that it is educationally blasphemous, economically corrupt, and slanderous to human dignity and capability to permit a student to be taught such things as parts of speech, factual information, language memorization and drill and similar materials by a live teacher in a classroom--when that kind of teaching can be done at least as effectively by currently available educational media, enabling the instructor to be free to work with the students in their thinking, in their aesthetic development, in their moral growth. I think we all agree that we should at least have enough respect for our teachers to grant that they can do things beyond that which machines can do, and that we should cease using them as though they were machines. That we should free our youth in the classroom from the excess time needed for factual learning so that they may devote that time to their fulfillment as non-mechanized human beings; not memorizing, but creating; as people with minds that do not store information, but apply it; as living things with feelings and imaginations to take the mundane and make them beautiful and meaningful for themselves and for all the world.

The responsibility to upgrade and update education is everyone's. Every college president and dean and every board of trustees; every

state superintendent and every legislature; every principal and every teacher; every citizen who seems content to see his or her child go through the same educative process we did, as if the rote answers in our today will somehow teach a child how to ask the probing questions needed for his tomorrow.

And our obligation is the greatest, because our understanding of and ability to use that which can create the needed change is the greater.

First, for example, anyone responsible for ITV should question its use as reinforcement for the concept of information memorization with which education perpetuates information and IQ tests used for admission and evaluation of students. Such tests discriminate against the creative person, the person who can contribute most to our world, and favor the person with the retentive memory, even if that is the latter's only attribute. There is some doubt whether most examinations, as we now know them, have any real value any longer on any educational level. Serious consideration should be given to the abolition of such testing.

Second, I don't have to tell you that children and adults spend more time being exposed to television and radio than to virtually anything else in life. Because TV affects the pattern of and psychological orientation to learning and thinking, over and above the content of the medium, we must see to it that a study of the media themselves--of at the very least television and radio--must become part of every curriculum on every level.

It isn't easy, I know. There are courses on the importance of physical fitness--but everybody is sitting in front of the television set!

There are courses on the importance of literature--but everybody is sitting in front of the television set! There are courses on the importance of nutrition--but everybody is eating a TV dinner--while sitting in front of the television set! But a course on the importance of television! Good heavens! What for!

Third, if we indeed believe that the media are as important and valuable as we say they are, then we must not abort them before they have had a chance to take their place in educational life. We claim that TV (and the other media), for example, can--finally--achieve what people like John Dewey said education should do, but which education has not had the resources to do until now; that is, to put the student into an effective relationship with and control over his environment, to--simply--take the child out of the classroom into the world, and to bring the world into the classroom. Part of our obligation, if we believe the media can make a significant contribution to education, is to seek to free the student from the rote requirements of attendance and the lowest common denominator lesson plans and fixed physical limitations. The student should be permitted, be encouraged, be motivated, be guided to independent study and learning--because he now has the resources to do this well.

Fourth, we have got to stop being insular and isolated. We have quickly got to make our area of ITV--if that is indeed our principal area--part of the total technology available for learning. We must orient our special interest--strengthen our special interest into an electric cause. We must not cease to seek a technological complex--

a carrel if it is to take that already outmoded physical form--for every student on every level, to provide that student with the fullest visual-aural-tactile-sensory experience possible that can help him feel and understand and relate more effectively to the world he is living in.

Fifth, we have got to go into the schools, into the forums, into the streets, into the homes, to the principals, to the teachers, to the public officials, to the parents, to let them know strongly, clearly, unequivocally why it is not merely advisable or valuable--but <u>essential</u> that they change their curricular and administrative practices to obtain the currently best possible education for their children--and for themselves. Tell them with confidence. Don't ask them with apology. Let them be the first kid on their block with the educational revolution. That's what we should be selling: revolution. But if we are selling our communities reinforcement, supplementary accessories to that which is already outmoded and second rate--who needs it!

And sixth, and perhaps most important, we have got to make ourselves and our special resources and abilities part of the total philosophy of the modern world. All experiences and relationships of human beings must be part of education, which should not be limited, as it generally is now, to the formal classroom. Because education has by and large abdicated its responsibilities for teaching and guidance in many areas critical to the student's development--frequently because those areas may be controversial--does not mean that

television, which can so effectively bring the student to the world and the world to the student--must do likewise.

ITV in this regard goes far beyond the classroom because our technology permits us to go beyond it, and because we cannot, must not separate the student from the world he is living in, whether that student is a child or an adult, whether in a schoolhouse or an apartment house, whether the grade level is a high one or a low one. If we are in television, then we must serve all, in the varying combinations and interrelationships that reflect the potentials and needs of society.

We should use the media in terms of the total learning process, in terms of humanistic principles. We cannot--must not hide behind the non-controversial platitudes and safe fictional rationalizations of Dick and Jane. We cannot pretend to educate by limiting our responsibilities to that which is historically safe. Howard K. Smith, judging entries for Emmy Awards a couple of years ago, tells how he sat through six solid hours of documentaries. "They were all very elaborate," he said, "and in beautiful color and must have cost a fortune to produce. But not one dealt with the untidy but fascinating world we live in. Most were a good two or three safe centuries away from today."

Apropos of this century, the Federal Interagency Broadcast Committee was recently informed by the Vice President of the President's Youth Opportunity Program and asked to explore some of the ways in which the mass media might be of assistance. This program will attempt to help

young people, particularly in the inner cities and especially this summer, so that they may fulfill their needs and their privileges constructively. Here is an opportunity to realize some of the full potential of television.

Some of you are familiar with the closed-circuit television system that was in operation for about a decade just a few blocks away from here, at the Chelsea Houses on the west side of New York City. Closed-circuit television was used in this low-income housing project to bring the school and the community closer together, to help overcome the language barrier between English-speaking and Spanish-speaking children, to bring about an understanding of needs and potentials of people and of the world that can enable all the people in the area to make the most of the opportunities of the modern world that has made them part of each other's life. This is precisely what the relationship can be, in specific terms, between media and society.

We must take education by the hair and pull it, kicking and screaming, if necessary, into the 20th century.

If you accept the privilege of being in the forefront of the modern world potential, then you must accept the responsibility. If you accept the awesome privilege of the television machine, then either accept its responsibility or hie thee to a flannel board.

Otherwise you are controlling the means and not caring what the end is. Any end to justify the use of the means is complete abandonment of any semblance of humanity. Perhaps each of us can do what needs

to be done by ourselves. But if we can't do it individually, then right here and now, before this conference is over, in small groups or in large groups, we can plan and we can do it with others.

Don't let the machines make of you machines to create of others machines--without regard to where they--where we are going or what we shall do once we get there.

Television is ten feet tall. And you, because you have chosen to be its guide and its master, you are ten feet tall. From this moment henceforth, let no one here stand or act smaller than the educational giant you must be.